During April-August, 2008 prices (in terms of Wholesale Prices Index) of inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, diesel have recorded an increase of 5.15%, 3.80% and 9.81% respectively.

(c) National Commission on Farmers (Swaminathan Commission) had recommended that Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production. This recommendation has not been accepted by the Government since MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) who, *Inter-alia* takes into account various factors, like cost of production of respective crops before arriving at their recommendations.

(d) The Government has already announced MSP of Rs. 850 per quintal for Paddy Common and Rs. 880 per quintal for Paddy Grade 'A' for 2008-09 season and there is no proposal, at present, to revise the same. However, a proposal to grant bonus of Rs.50 per quintal has been approved, over and above the MSP.

Insurance cover to livestock, fish and birds

19. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes implemented by Government to provide insurance cover to the livestock, fish and birds in the country;

(b) the salient features of each of the schemes;

(c) whether any of such schemes are in force in Goa;

(d) if so, financial assistance given to the State, till date under various schemes; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) In order to provide insurance cover to the livestock, Government of India implemented Livestock Insurance Scheme during 2005-06 to 2007-08. At present, there is no scheme for insuring fish and birds in the country.

(b) The Livestock Insurance scheme was implemented in 100 selected districts of the country on pilot basis to provide insurance cover to crossbred and high yielding Cattle and Buffaloes. The scheme provides 50% subsidy on the insurance premium and rest of the premium is being borne by the beneficiaries. One time benefit of subsidy on premium is restricted to maximum of two animals per beneficiary for a policy of maximum period of three years.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Does not arise.

Activities under Coastal Aquaculture Authority

20. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coastal Aquaculture Authority has started functioning in the country;

(b) if so, the activities undertaken by the Authorities;

(c) whether the Authority has its presence in Goa;

(d) if so, the activities carried on by the Authority in the State; and

(e) the details as regards power and functions of the Authorities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA) has been entrusted with the task of regulating the activities connected with coastal aquaculture in the country. Major activities undertaken are regulation and registration of coastal aquaculture farms and fixing standards for all coastal aquaculture inputs such as seed, feed etc. in order to achieve an eco-friendly and sustainable development of coastal aquaculture.

(c) The Authority is at present functioning with its headquarters at Chennai. The States level and District level Committees have been set up in all the coastal States including Goa in accordance with the provisions of Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005 for carrying out the various activities enumerated in the Act.

(d) The shrimp farms in the state are being registered by the Coastal Aquaculture Authority as per the recommendations of the District level and State level Committees of the State Government.

(e) Details regarding powers and functions of the Authority are listed in the coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005 and the Rules framed thereunder. The prominent functions are:

(i) to make regulations for the construction and operation of aquaculture farms within the coastal areas;

(ii) to inspect coastal aquaculture farms with a view to ascertaining their environmental impact caused by coastal aquaculture;

(iii) to register coastal aquaculture farms;

(iv) to ensure compliance of the regulations etc.

Decline in the price of wheat in the International market

†21. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of wheat in the international market have fallen in the year 2008 in comparison to previous years;

(b) if so, the minimum and maximum price of wheat in respect of sale and purchase during each month from September to December 2008, month-wise; and

(c) to what extent in terms of percentage this price has decreased or increased as compared to the corresponding months of the year 2007 and 2006?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.